

Message Text

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17

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 RSC-01 L-02

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 OMB-01 AID-05 ACDA-05

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R 270705Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2196

COMUSSAG NKP THAILAND

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

COMIPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 950

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, VS

SUBJECT: MR-4 MONTHLY TAOR MEETING

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION AMEMBASSY SAIGON FROM AMCONSUL CAN THO
24 JAN 75 BEING REPEATED FOR YOUR INFORMATION

QUOTE CAN THO 026

1. SUMMARY: MR4 COMMANDER, MAJOR GENERAL NGUYEN KHOA NAM,
HELD HIS MONTHLY MEETING OF DIVISION COMMANDERS AND PROVINCE
CHIEFS ON 22 JAN 1975 TO REVIEW THE TACTICAL SITUATION
AND STATUS OF THE PROGRAMS OF THE 1974 LOCAL SECURITY AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN. HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDED DESCRIPTION
OF NVA THREAT TO KIEN TUONG, ACCOUNT OF SETBACKS TO PACIFICATION
IN COUNTRYSIDE SUFFERED IN DECEMBER UPSURGE OF
FIGHTING, TABULATION OF SHORTFALLS IN RECONSTRUCTION OF
VILLAGE OFFICES AND IN CANAL DREDGING AND CONSTRUCTION,
PROVINCE BY PROVINCE PORTRAYAL OF TIMES AND PLACES PROVINCE
AND DISTRICT CHIEFS STAYED OVERNIGHT IN VILLAGES OR HAMLETS,
STATEMENT BY NFA REP ON GVN INTENTIONS FOR RICE PURCHASE
AND STORAGE, AND BRIEFING BY 7TH DIVISION CG ON THREATS
TO QL4 AND COUNTERMEASURES. END SUMMARY.

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2. MR4 CORPS G-2 PRESENTATION SHOWED 5TH NVA DIVISION DEPLOYMENT IN AND NEAR KIEN TUONG, BUT DID NOT INDICATE THAT MOC HOA BEING HIT BY INDIRECT FIRE FROM ALL DIRECTIONS, OR THAT LONG KHOT WAS OVERRUN, TUYEN BINH DISTRICT TOWN NOW ENDANGERED, AND TUYEN NHON DISTRICT TOWN LOST EXCEPT FOR SUB-SECTOR COMPOUND AND NAVY BASE. (EARLIER IN DAY, MG NAM ACKNOWLEDGED TO CONGEN OFFICER THAT HE WAS AWARE OF GRAVITY OF SITUATION, FELT 9TH DIVISION WOULD HOLD MOC HOA, BUT WAS LESS CONFIDENT ABOUT REMOTE TUYEN BINH AND RECOVERY OF TUYEN NHON. ARVN 7TH DIVISION UNITS COULD NOT EASILY BE SPARED TO ASSIST 9TH DIVISION BECAUSE OF IMPORTANCE OF PRIMARY TASK OF CONTAINING NVA 8TH DIVISION AND PROTECTING QL4 IN DINH TUONG.)

3. THE "EVACUATION" OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS OF 40 VILLAGES IN THE DELTA AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE FIGHTING OVER PAST MONTH WAS ADMITTED AS A SERIOUS BLOW TO PACIFICATION. TOTAL MAY HAVE EXCEEDED THAT NUMBER BY DATE OF MEETING, HOWEVER, SINCE PRESSEES STILL HIGH IN VINH BINH, VI H LONG, CHUONG THIEN, KIEN GIANG, AND AN XUYEN, IN CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN DELTA, AND TO DINH TUONG AND KIEN TUONG IN NORTH. NAM ORDERED PROVINCE CHIEFS TO RECOVER WHERE POSSIBLE, AND NOT LET "EXILE" CONDITION HARDEN. AS PART OF WHAT WAS OBVIOUS POINT THAT PROVINCE CHIEFS NEGLECTING LOWER LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT, NAM HAD GRAPHIC PICTORIAL GIVEN BY RSDCC CHIEF OF THE NUMBER OF TIMES THEY HAD STAYED OVERNIGHT IN VILLAGES RECENTLY. THE TIMES WERE FEW FOR MOST, AND THE SITES WERE GENERALLY ALONG THE MAJOR AND SAFER LOCATIONS. DISTRICT CHIEF PERFORMANCE IN OVERNIGHTING IN HAMLETS WAS ALSO ILLUSTRATED, AND THE RECORD WAS MIXED BUT OVERALL UNIMPRESSIVE. THE CONTENTION THAT COMMAND RESPONSIBILITIES MADE IT VERY DIFFICULT TO BE AWAY FROM SECTOR AND SUB-SECTOR TASKS DID NOT GET A SYMPATHETIC RESPONSE FROM THE COMMANDING GENERAL, WHO REMINDED HIS AUDIENCE THAT NOT ONLY WERE THEY TO SPEND NIGHTS IN VILLAGES WHENEVER POSSIBLE, BUT 75 PERCENT OF THEIR TOTAL TIME WAS TO BE DEVOTED TO MILITARY MATTERS AND LEADERSHIP.

4. INFLATION WAS CITED AS THE PRIMARY VILLAIN IN THE FAILURE OF SEVERAL PROVINCES TO RECONSTRUCT DAMAGED VILLAGE OFFICES. BETWEEN THE TIME REQUESTS ARE MADE TO THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR FOR FUNDS AND THEIR ALLOCATION PRICES OF CONSTRUCTION

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MATERIALS HAD USUALLY RISEN WELL BEYOND ORIGINAL ESTIMATES. THE SAME PROBLEM OBTAINS FOR ALMOST ALL CONSTRUCTION, FROM CANALS TO VETERANS' HOUSING. NAM EXHORTED HIS SUBORDINATES TO INSURE THAT NO DELAYS IN PROCESSING DOSSIERS, REQUESTS, AND FOLLOW-UP INQUIRIES OCCURRED AT PROVINCE LEVEL.

5. THE REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NFA OUTLINED THE NEW CREDIT PROVISIONS FOR THE RICE TRADE AND INDICATED THAT THE

AGENCY WOULD ATTEMPT TO PURCHASE PADDY, STORE IT IN DELTA MILLS, AND TAKE DELIVERY AS MUCH AS SIX MONTHS LATER AS RICE. THE PROVINCE CHIEFS WERE ASKED TO GUARANTEE SECURITY FOR THE STORED STOCKS.

6. BECAUSE OF THE CRITICAL IMPORTANCE OF QL4 FOR BOTH FOOD SHIPMENTS TO SAIGON AND MILITARY SUPPLY TO THE DELTA, MG NAM HAD 7TH DIVISION'S COMMANDER BG HAI BRIEF THE MEETING ON THE CURRENT AND EXPECTED NVA/VC EFFORTS TO INTERDICT THE HIGHWAY AND ON THE MEASURES HE AND THE DINH TUONG PROVINCE CHIEF WERE EMPLOYING TO COUNTER THEM. ALTHOUGH THE PREPOSITIONED DIRT FILL AND TEMPORARY BRIDGING COULD BE QUICKLY USED BY ENGINEER UNITS TO REPAIR DAMAGE IF SAPPERS WERE SUCCESSFUL IN MINING THE ROAD AND BRIDGES AT NIGHT, HAI POINTED OUT A NEW TECHNIQUE EMPLOYED BY THE ENEMY THAT WOULD BE MUCH HARDER TO REDRESS EVEN IF MORE DIFFICULT TO ACCOMPLISH. AS MANY AS SIX MINES WOULD BE PLACED IN THE ROAD, STAGGERED ON EACH SIDE, AND COMMAND DETONATED IN DAYLIGHT HOURS WHEN CIVILIAN AND MILITARY TRUCK TRAFFIC WAS HEAVY. THE RESULTING DAMAGE WOULD BE GREATER THAN EXPERIENCED IN THE PAST, AND REPAIRS DELAYED BECAUSE TRAFFIC TIE UPS COULD BE SEVERAL KILOMETERS EACH DIRECTION FROM THE EXPLOSION, EFFECTIVELY DENYING THE AREA TO ENGINEER VEHICLES FOR SEVERAL HOURS. INTELLIGENCE REPORTS PUT THE AMOUNT OF EXPLOSIVES BEING STOCKPILED BY NVA/VC IN DINH TUONG TO USE IN THIS WAY AS 15,000 MT. THE PROPOSED COUNTER-MEASURES -- GREATER VIGILANCE BY PATROLS AND AMBUSH TEAMS OF RF AND PF, AND POLICE ACTION TO HAVE DRIVERS PULL OVER IN CASE OF TRAFFIC BLOCKS SO REPAIR VEHICLES CAN REACH SCENE -- WERE LOGICAL AND SENSIBLE, BUT, AS WAS EVIDENT IN EVERYONE'S FACE AND CONVERSATION AFTERWARD, NOT TO BE EXPECTED BECAUSE THEY CALLED FOR A DEGREE OF DISCIPLINE ONLY RARELY ENCOUNTERED IN VIETNAM. SIGNED MCNAMARA
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